

PECANS

Nutrition:

Pecans are a good source of potassium, thiamine, zinc, copper, magnesium, phosphorous, niacin, folic acid, iron, and vitamin B6, and also a good source of fiber. The fats are composed of 87% unsaturated fatty acids (62% monounsaturated and 25% polyunsaturated)

Buying & Storing:

Pecans are available in many forms; you'll find them vacuum-packed in jars, sealed in plastic bags, packed in cans or whole in the shell. For the freshest and most flavorful pecans, choose whole ones in the shell. When choosing whole unshelled pecans, look for nuts that are heavy for their size and don't rattle when shaken. There shouldn't be any cracks or holes in the shells.

Shelled pecans absorb odors and turn rancid quickly. Store them in the refrigerator in a sealed container for up to 6 months.

Unshelled pecans may be stored for about 3 months at room temperature or frozen in moisture-vapor-proof bags or plastic containers for up to 1 year.

Shelled or cracked pecans may be frozen in moisture-vapor-proof bags, freezer jars or plastic containers.

It takes 2 ½ pounds of pecans in the shell to equal 1 pound of shelled pecans.

THE SWEETEST ROASTED PECANS ON EARTH

To make the Sweetest Roasted Pecans On Earth, you need to understand the source of bitterness. Pecans have two sources of bitterness -- naturally occurring tannins in the kernel and pieces of corky material from the inside of the nut which can adhere to the kernel. Some of the tannin and all of the corky material can be removed by washing the kernels before cooking.

To "sweeten" the pecan meats (kernels), simply put the pecan kernels in a bowl and fill with lukewarm water. Stir and tumble the meats in the water for several minutes and you will see the discoloration in the water. Pour off that water and repeat the process at least once more. You will notice that the water becomes less and less discolored. Spread the pecans on a paper towel and allow them to dry for 10 or 15 minutes. Drying is not necessary if the pecan kernels are going to be oven roasted. To roast the pecan kernels, spread the kernels evenly in a pan with sides (to allow stirring without spillage) and put in a pre-heated oven at 350 degrees F. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring every couple of minutes. Allow meats to brown then remove them from the oven and immediately stir in two tablespoons of butter per pound of pecans. Salt or other seasonings to taste.

This information is courtesy of Miss Carrie May Jones of Somerville, Tennessee. She is a retired Home Demonstration Agent for the Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service.

SWEET AND SPICY PECANS

2 cups pecan halves
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1/8 teaspoon salt

Toss pecans in butter. Combine sugar and remaining ingredients; sprinkle over pecans, tossing to coat. Spread on a baking sheet; bake at 325 degrees F for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool. Yield: 2 cups.

BBQ PECANS

2 tablespoons melted margarine
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon catsup
1/8 teaspoon hot sauce
4 cups pecan halves
Salt (optional)

Combine first 4 ingredients, stir in pecans and mix well. Spread pecans evenly in a shallow baking pan. Bake at 300 degrees F for 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Drain on paper towel. Sprinkle with salt if desired.

SUGARED PECANS

1 cup sugar
1/4 cup water
1 1/2 cups pecan halves
1 teaspoon light corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla

Boil sugar, water and syrup together until the long thread stage is reached at 230 degrees F. on a candy thermometer. Add vanilla; cool until lukewarm. Beat until the mixture becomes creamy. Add pecan halves. Stir until pecans are well coated. Pour on waxed paper and separate pecans. Store in tightly covered containers. NOTE: If mixture becomes too firm before all pecans are coated, add a few drops of warm water and continue stirring.

MICROWAVE PECAN FUDGE

PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes plus cooling.

MICROWAVE COOKING TIME: 11 and one-half minutes

3/4 cup (one and one-half sticks) margarine or butter

3 cups of sugar

1 can (5 ounce) evaporated milk (2/3 cup)

1 package (12 ounce) semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 jar (7 ounces) Jet-Puffed Marshmallow Creme

1 cup of chopped Pecans

1 teaspoon of vanilla

Lightly grease 13 x 9-inch or 9-inch square pan. Microwave margarine (butter) in 4-quart microwavable bowl or casserole on HIGH for one minute or until melted. Add sugar and milk; mix well. Microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes or until mixture begins to boil, stirring after 3 minutes. Mix well; scrape bowl. Microwave on HIGH for 5 and one-half minutes, stirring after 3 minutes.

Gradually stir in chips until melted. Add remaining ingredients; mix well. Pour into prepared pan. Cool at room temperature; cut into squares. Makes 3 pounds.

PECAN-BUTTERMILK PRALINES

2 cups sugar

1 teaspoon soda

1 cup buttermilk

2 teaspoons vanilla

2 cups pecan halves

Mix sugar, soda and milk in heavy saucepan and cook over medium heat to softball stage (234 degrees F.) Remove from heat and add vanilla and pecans. Begin beating immediately. Beat until candy begins to thicken. Drop by teaspoon on waxed paper or greased baking sheet. Cool. Yields 30 small patties. Note: If mixture becomes too thick before all is dropped, stir in one or two drops of warm water.

MICROWAVE PECAN PRALINES

One box of brown sugar

One-half pint of heavy whipping cream

Microwave for 13 minutes on HIGH in a 5 quart container.

ADD:

2 tablespoons of butter
2 cups of pecan halves
1 teaspoon of vanilla

Mix and drop by spoonfuls onto aluminum foil. Let cool and start eating!

OLD-FASHION PECAN BRITTLE

3 cups sugar
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups pecans, chopped
2 tablespoons butter or margarine

Heat sugar with salt in a heavy frying pan over high heat until sugar begins to lump. Lower heat and stir until sugar melts. Stir in pecans. Add butter. Pour immediately onto a greased cookie sheet, quickly spreading out thin. When cool, break into pieces of desired size.

MICROWAVE PECAN BRITTLE

1 cup pecan halves
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup white corn syrup
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla

Stir together the sugar, syrup, and salt in a 1 1/2 quart bowl. Cook on high for 5 minutes. Add pecans, stir well. Cook on high for 2 minutes.

Add butter and blend. Cook on high for 2 - 3 minutes or until pecans start to toast.

Add soda and vanilla and stir until mixture turns a light caramel color. Quickly pour onto a lightly buttered cookie sheet. Cool and break into pieces.

Rub butter on the inside of empty bowl. Mixture is not as likely to sugar and mixture pours out easier.

PECAN-MERINGUE CHEWS

2 egg whites
2 cups brown sugar
4 cups pecans, chopped

Beat egg whites until stiff. Fold in brown sugar; add pecans. Drop by spoonfuls onto greased baking sheet and bake at 375 degrees F., until golden brown; about 10 to 12 minutes.

PECAN- CLUSTERS

1/4 cup butter or margarine
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1 1/2 (1 oz squares) unsweetened chocolate, melted
1/2 cup sifted flour
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups broken pecans

Cream butter or margarine and sugar. Add egg, vanilla, melted chocolate and mix well. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt and stir into creamed mixture. Add pecans. Drop from teaspoon on greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F. For 10 minutes. Makes 1 1/2 dozen.

RITZY PECAN PIE

Beat 3 egg whites until stiff, gradually adding 1 cup of sugar. Fold in 1 cup of chopped pecans, 1 cup of rolled Ritz® crackers, and 1 tsp. vanilla extract.

Place in slightly greased pie plate with sides higher than center. Bake in 325 degree F. oven about 30 minutes.

When cool, add 8 oz whipped topping with 1/4 cup additional pecans and refrigerate. It may be served immediately.

For more pecan recipes check go to:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/recipes/pecanrecipes/recindex.html>